# Expedition drifts in the Arctic ice to study climate

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by David W. Chu

After years of planning and days of travel, a team of scientists and technicians from Los Alamos National Laboratory at last have made it to the top of the world, that snow desert known as the Arctic.

As the team emerges from the comfort of the research ship R/V Polarstern, they are struck by the unforgiving cold, which during winter reaches minus-58 degrees. This is the place of the midnight sun and polar night, where it's often difficult to discern land from water because of the ice and snow that sit above it, and where polar bears and arctic foxes are the solitary creatures.

The Los Alamos team supports the Department of Energy's Atmospheric Radiation Measurement user facility, which provides the research community with observations of Earth's atmosphere. Such observatories are already in place in the Southern Great Plains in Oklahoma, the Eastern North Atlantic, and the North Slope of Alaska.

As part of MOSAiC, the team's objective is to install and operate a suite of instruments that collect data 24 hours a day, rotating fresh team members onto the ship during each subsequent leg. In addition to the writer of this article, others participating in the first leg of the MOSAiC expedition in various capacities were Paul Ortega of Los Alamos National Laboratory and Los Alamos subcontractors Vagner Castro, Steele Griffiths and Juarez Viegas.

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